

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY LIMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3138

INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 10493

EXDIS

FROM ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PE, VE, CU, CI

SUBJECT: ROGERS' CONVERSATION WITH VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT
PEREZ

1. I MET WITH VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT PEREZ AT THE VENEZUELAN EMBASSY FOR ABOUT A HALF HOUR TONIGHT (DEC 10). HE OPENED THE CONVERSATION BY DECLARING THAT THERE WAS A PROBLEM OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN VENEZUELA AND THE U.S. HE WAS QUITE AWARE OF THE SECRETARY'S LETTER TO SCHACHT AND SAID THAT SCHACHT SHOULD GO TO WASHINGTON IN JANUARY. I SUGGESTED THERE BE A DEFINITE AGENDA BEFOREHAND. PEREZ IS OF THE SAME MIND.

2. PEREZ BELIEVES WE ARE INFLEXIBLE ON CUBA. SAID THAT THE IMMINENT RECOGNITION OF CUBA BY VENEZUELA SHOULD NOT BE INTERPRETED THAT RELATIONS WOULD BE CORDIAL BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

3. HE FEELS THAT THE U.S. IS TO BLAME FOR WHAT HAPPENED AT QUITO. THE US HAD INFLUENCED HAITI TO VOTE AGAINST THE LIFTING OF SANCTIONS, HE SAID. I REJECTED THIS. OUR POSITION HAD BEEN ONE OF NEUTRALITY. THIS WAS A REAL ADVANCE ON CUBAN POLICY. AND WE CONTINUED TO THINK THAT
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LATIN AMERICANS SHOULD MAKE THEIR OWN DECISIONS. I TOLD

HIM THAT WE HAD ADOPTED THE NEUTRAL POLICY IN THE FIRST INSTANCE BECAUSE THE SPONSORS HAD ASSURED US THEY HAD THE VOTES WITHOUT US.

4. PEREZ BELIEVES IT IS ESSENTIAL TO REFORM THE RIO TREATY BUT WAS APPARENTLY UNAWARE OF OUR WILLINGNESS TO GO ALONG WITH THE ECUADORIAN CHANGE. I INFORMED HIM OF THIS.

5. HE SAID FLATLY THAT CUBA WILL ATTEND THE BUENOS AIRES MFM; VIGNES HAD SO DECIDED. UNFORTUNATELY, THE QUESTION OF CUBAN SANCTION WILL BE UNRESOLVED. ACCORDING TO PEREZ, CASTRO IS PROBABLY PLEASED AT THIS DEVELOPMENT SINCE THE LAST THING HE WANTED WAS TO ACHIEVE RECOGNITION THROUGH THE ACTION OF THE OAS. AN EXAMPLE OF THIS WAS THE PRESSURE APPLIED TO TORRIJOS BY CASTRO WHICH RESULTED IN PANAMA'S UNILATERAL RECOGNITION OF CUBA. PEREZ SAID HE HAD PERSONALLY CALLED TORRIJOS TO TRY TO DISSUADE HIM FROM SUCH ACTION. PEREZ THOUGHT THE WHOLE ISSUE WAS GIVING ENTIRELY TOO MUCH PUBLICITY TO CASTRO WHOSE STAR HAD ALREADY BEGUN TO FALL.

6. I DREW ATTENTION TO THE MISGIVINGS OF CHILE, PARAGUAY AND URUGUAY IN REGARD TO THE CUBAN QUESTION. PEREZ CLAIMED THAT THE CHILEAN POSITION HAD VARIED.

7. I ASKED PEREZ ABOUT THE PROPOSED CARACAS MEETING OF LATIN AMERICAN PRESIDENTS. HE SAID IT WOULD PROBABLY TAKE PLACE IN JULY AND WOULD MAINLY FOCUS ON ECONOMIC QUESTIONS. WE SHOULD NOT REGARD THE MEETING UNFAVORABLY. I ASKED HIM WHAT POSITION THE US SHOULD TAKE TOWARD THE CARACAS MEETING. HE SAID HE DID NOT THINK ANY PARTICULAR ACTION WAS REQUIRED BUT IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF WE WERE TO EXPRESS SATISFACTION THAT THE MEETING IS TAKING PLACE.

8. HE THINKS THE OAS URGENTLY NEEDS TO BE REFORMED. IN HIS VIEW, IT MUST BE THE ORGANIZATION OF ALL THE COUNTRIES OF THE HEMISPHERE.

9. WITH REGARD TO THE SITUATION IN PERU HE SAID HE THOUGHT THE GOVERNMENT HERE WAS "STRANGE", AND HE ASKED

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RHETORICALLY WHAT THEY PLANNED TO DO WITH ALL THE ARMS WHICH THEY WERE OBTAINING. IT HAD BEEN DIFFICULT TO NEGOTIATE THE PORTION OF THE DECLARATION OF AYACUCHO WHICH DEALT WITH LIMITATION OF OFFENSIVE ARMS. HE CONFIDED THAT BOLIVIA AND ECUADOR WERE "SCARED" ABOUT THE SITUATION. HE HOPED THE CARACAS MEETING WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO PRESERVING THE PEACE.

10. COMMENT: PEREZ IS OBVIOUSLY TESTING HIS WINGS AS A HEMISPHERIC LEADER. HIS CARACAS MEETING INITIATIVE IS A CHANCY GAMBIT AT BEST. BRAZIL AND MEXICO HAVE NOT EVIDENTLY REGISTERED THEIR VIEWS AND IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE THAT HE CAN GET TWENTY OR MORE LA HEADS OF STATE IN THIS DIVIDED HEMISPHERE AROUND THE SAME TABLE ANY TIME IN 1975. IN ANY EVENT, HE--AND HIS COLLEAGUES, INCLUDING SCHACT, PEREZ GUERRERO AND A HOST OF OTHERS IN THE LARGE VENEZUELAN DELEGATION HERE--ARE EMPHATIC THAT THEY HOPE NOT ONLY TO MAINTAIN BUT TO CONSIDERABLY IMPROVE THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE GOUS AT THE SAME TIME AS THEY GO FORWARD WITH THE PLANS FOR THE MEETING OF LA PRESIDENTS.
BARNEBEY

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